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UNH Faculty Development Program Wins National Honor

Program is used as a model for colleges and universities nationwide

By Lori Gula
UNH News Bureau

February 20, 2002

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire's Academic Program in College Teaching has received a national certificate of excellence for its innovative approach to faculty and future faculty development.

The certificate, and accompanying $5,000, was awarded as part of the 2002 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award, presented recently at the 84th annual meeting of the American Council on Education in San Francisco. Criteria for the Hesburgh Award include "significance of the program to higher education; appropriate program rationale; and successful results and impact on undergraduate teaching and student learning."

UNH's Academic Program in College Teaching is a professional development program for current faculty that also prepares doctoral students for the challenges of college teaching careers. The program is the result of a collaboration between the UNH Graduate School and the Teaching Excellence Program.

"This award represents a true milestone as we collaborate to offer both our doctoral students and our faculty opportunities not provided at any other college or university," says Graduate School Associate Dean Harry Richards, who directs the program for doctoral students.

Teaching Excellence Program Director Lee Seidel agrees, adding that "this program has brought together faculty and doctoral students from throughout the
university in a common effort to strengthen one of our core missions -- teaching and learning."

The program helps doctoral students learn to analyze and evaluate their teaching and learning outcomes, with faculty mentoring and supervision expanding their teaching competencies. The result: a dynamic relationship is created between UNH's graduate students in its 21 Ph.D. programs and faculty seeking to enhance their teaching skills.

UNH launched the Academic Program in College Teaching in 1995 with the assistance of a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). Since then, it has become a model program, influencing the national culture of college-level teaching and learning. In 1997, the program also was invited to join the national Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) network sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU), and the Council of Graduate Schools with its collaborating partners: St. Anselm College, Keene State College, Howard University and UNH-M.

As a result, FIPSE has provided additional support for UNH to disseminate the program at other colleges and universities, including the University of Connecticut, University of Maine, Syracuse University, Tufts University and the Colleges of Worcester (MA) Consortium.

The university has found that the best way to support the UNH faculty's effort to then support their teaching approaches with the traditional faculty development services offered by its Teaching Excellence program.

The Academic Program in College Teaching has created many new opportunities for faculty and future faculty development. They include a 32-credit non-thesis professional dual degree in college teaching for doctoral students, a 12-credit Cognate in College Teaching added to the primary doctoral degree, and a 12-credit Certificate in College Teaching for faculty through the UNH Summer Institute. Typically at least half of the participants in this institute are faculty from UNH and other colleges and universities. The Academic Program in College Teaching and the Teaching Excellence Program faculty collaborative has
involved more than 40 percent of the estimated 1,100 UNH faculty.

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